
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CIVICS EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a growing
2 lack of civic awareness, knowledge of how government works, and
3 democratic participation. As more focus is placed on science,
4 technology, English, and math education, attention to civic
5 education continues to diminish. Promoting civics education
6 prepares students to stay informed and encourages civic
7 engagement.

8 The legislature further finds that in January 2015, Arizona
9 became the first state to require high school students to pass
10 the United States citizenship test on civics before they can
11 graduate. The exam questions are identical to the civics
12 portion of the naturalization test used by the United States
13 citizenship and immigration services. In order to pass the
14 exam, students must correctly answer at least sixty of the one
15 hundred questions. Students can begin taking the exam in the
16 ninth grade and are allowed to retake the test until they pass.
17 This legislative charge is part of a larger nationwide goal of



1 having all fifty states adopt the civic exam requirement by
2 2017, which is the two hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the
3 United States Constitution. Fifteen other states are expected
4 to consider such legislation this year.

5 The purpose of this Act is to require high school students
6 to pass the United States citizenship exam in order to obtain a
7 high school diploma.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
10 and to read as follows:

11 "§302A- US Citizenship Exam; graduation requirement. (a)
12 Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the department shall
13 require students to pass the United States citizenship exam in
14 order to graduate from high school or obtain a high school
15 diploma. All high school students must correctly answer at
16 least sixty of the one hundred questions listed on a test that
17 is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test
18 used by the United States citizenship and immigration services.

19 (b) Every student, beginning with students entering the
20 ninth grade, shall be provided with an opportunity to take the
21 civics test at least once per school year. A student may repeat



1 the test as often as necessary to demonstrate proficiency. The
2 test requirement does not apply to a student who is exempted in
3 accordance with the student's individualized educational plan.

4 (c) The school district or charter school may determine
5 the method and manner in which to administer the test. A
6 district school or charter school shall document on the
7 student's transcript that the student has passed the United
8 States citizenship exam."

9 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:


BIR

JAN 27 2015



H.B. NO. 1122

Report Title:

Education; High School Graduation Requirements; Citizenship Exam

Description:

Requires students to pass the United States citizenship exam in order to receive a high school diploma.

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